



## MEDIA FAIRNESS INITIATIVE: A WEEKLY LOOK AT BIAS IN THE NEWS Thursday, September 20, 2007



### Did The New York Times Give MoveOn.org a Discount?

According to numerous published reports, the New York Times charged well under its usual rate for the recent full-page moveon.org ad that suggested that General Petraeus is a traitor. The ad featured the question “General Petraeus or General Betray Us?” The published rate for a similar-sized ad is reportedly about \$182,000 but the liberal organization moveon.org reportedly purchased the ad for just \$65,000 – a discount of \$117,000.

### Survey Shows Americans Critical of News Organizations

A Pew Research Center survey released on August 9 found that the American public continues to fault news organizations for a number of perceived failures, with solid majorities criticizing them for political bias, inaccuracy and failing to acknowledge mistakes. The internet news audience is particularly likely to criticize news organizations for their lack of empathy, their failure to “stand up for America,” and political bias. Over half of respondents believe that news organizations are too critical of America and that news stories are often inaccurate. **Since 1985, the public’s favorability ratings of major national newspapers and cable television networks have fallen by 13 points and 14 points, respectively.**



### Heavy TV Viewing May Erode Values

A recent Culture and Media Institute survey found that 74 percent of Americans believe the nation’s moral values have declined over the past 20 years. Almost half believe values are “much weaker” than 20 years ago. 64 percent of Americans believe the media are an important factor in shaping moral values. Only 7 percent say the media are not important in shaping moral values. **73 percent believe the entertainment media has a negative effect on America’s commitment to moral values.**

### The New York Times Game: Opinion or Hard News?

Although all three of these recent excerpts from *The New York Times* appear to be from opinion pieces, only one of them actually is. Can you guess which one? (Answer below)

1. “The assessment, known as a National Intelligence Estimate, casts strong doubts on the viability of the Bush administration strategy in Iraq. It gives a dim prognosis on the likelihood that Iraqi politicians can heal deep sectarian rifts before next spring ...”
2. “Over the past two years, more than 40 local and state governments have passed ordinances and legislation aimed at making life miserable for illegal immigrants in the hope that they’ll have no choice but to return to their countries of origin. Deportation by attrition, some call it.”
3. “At the heart of the opposition rests conservative hosts on talk radio and cable television, which often are a muscular if untamed piece of the Republican message machine.”

Answer: #2